THE PARISH MESSENGER

News of the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod of America

VOL. 7 WINNIPEG, MANITOBA No. 2

Highlights of the Synod Convention

By REV. G. GUTTORMSSON

The sixty-seventh annual convention of the Icelandic Lutheran Synod was held this summer at Lundar, Manitoba, June 21 to 26. It was attended by 40 lay delegates, 10 clerical delegates, 1 official representative of the United Lutheran Church, and 3 privileged visitors—60 in all. Several ordinary visitors came to the convention and were present at some of the meetings.

The convention opened with a divine service on the evening of June 21. Dr. H. Sigmar of Blaine, Washington preached the sermon. The pastor at Lundar, Rev. Johann Fredriksson, assisted by Rev. S. Olafsson, of Selkirk, Manitoba, conducted the service. Eighty-three people received communion. Pastor Harald Sigmar of Gimli, Manitoba was convention chaplain.

Five speakers gave addresses at the convention: Dr. E. H. Knudten, President of the New Jersey Synod, the U.L.C.A.'s official representative at the convention; Miss Frances Dysinger, L.L.D., Secretary for Promotion, Women's Missionary Society, U.L.C.A.; President Fafnis and Treasurer Bardal of our own Synod, and President Franklin Clark Fry, of the U.L.C.A.

Three offerings, taken at the evening sessions, yielded almost $230; $38.46 for the Pastors' Memorial Fund, $78.25 for Missions; and $113.10 for Lutheran World Action (including $20 from the Betel Congregation at Silver Bay).

The Synod also received a generous donation from Mrs. Gudrun Blondal, in memory of her late husband, Dr. August Blondal; $75 for an "audio-visual kit", to be used in connection with leadership education in the parishes.

According to reports presented at the convention, our Synod now consists of 38 congregations, as against 44 reported last year. The loss is more apparent than real. One congregation, now served by a minister of the E.L.C., left the Synod. The names of five pastorless congregations, that have for years existed in name only, were stricken off the record. Some of these may be reorganized in the near future.

In spite of this, the Synod has gained slightly in overall membership. Women's and young peoples' organizations have also gained members, but there has been a slight loss in Sunday School enrolment.

A most welcome progress is evident in some branches of the work. Most or all of the parishes have been decorating, remodeling, or enlarging their churches or other buildings. One church was bought and is now being remodeled. Two parsonages were built, and one bought, during the year.

The parishes reported congregational expenditures in the amount of $51,132, an increase of $1,677 over the previous year. Benevolences, apportioned and unapportioned, totaled $7,858, an increase of $626.

But these statistics are far from complete. Twelve congregations sent no reports to the Secretary of the Synod during the year.

Sums received by the Treasurer of the Synod, for Lutheran benevolences, were as follows: For Missions (apportionment) $2,136.40; for Lutheran World Action, $1,134.43; for CHEY (Christian Higher

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Printed Quarterly in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

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6522-20th Ave. N.W.,
Seattle 7, Wash.

Education Year) $1,700.50. Total receipts for all benevolences, $4,971.33.

Our congregations have been advised to report all benevolences, whether contributed to Synodical or U.L.C.A. activities or given to other causes. Therefore expenditures of this kind reported by the parishes are bound to exceed the receipts reported by the Treasurer of the Synod.

* * *

Information on matters dealt with by the convention may be summarized under the following heads:

I. *Missions.* Financial aid to our Home Missions Field is supplied from the Missions and Benevolences fund of the U.L.C.A. Our own Home Missions Committee is in charge of the work among our people. Three of our congregations, one in Vancouver, B.C., another in Blaine, Washington, and the third in Cavalier, N.D., received aid from the U.L.C. Missions fund last year. The Calvary congregation in Seattle, Wash., for some years past a recipient of such aid, has now become self-supporting.

The Foam Lake-Wynyard mission, where there are at present no congregations, has been served by the Rev. Skuli Sigurgeirsson during the year, with good results, and may receive financial aid from the Board of American Missions, U.L.C.A.

The convention passed a resolution urging our Home Missions Committee to seek aid from the U.L.C.A. for work in this field, and requesting each of our congregations to devote one Sunday's collection, early this summer, to this same cause.

The Vancouver congregation has called a pastor from Iceland, the Rev. Eirikur Brynjolfsson. The cost of moving him and his family from Reykjavik to Vancouver will total some nine hundred dollars. The convention voted to contribute one-third of this sum from the general fund of the Synod.

II. *Our Part in the Work of the U.L.C.A.* Besides the aid to our Home Mission Work, the United Lutheran Church has given us much assistance of various kinds, and is ready to give us more help.

Several parishes have received loans from the U.L.C. for their building operations. Interest charges on these loans are either nominal or none at all.

Miss Eleanore Gillstrom and the Rev. Lawrence M. Reese conducted a "Sunday school teachers' clinic" in some of our parishes last year. Similar "clinics" have been held among us in former years. This work is sponsored by the Parish and Church School Board, U.L.C.A., free of charge.

Several parishes also made use of the movie film "For Good or Evil", which was furnished free of charge by the Laymen's Movement for Stewardship, an auxiliary of the U.L.C.A.

Aids of many kinds; both personal assistance and advice, and also a rich store of materials, such as film strips, slides, records; also pamphlets and periodicals and other printed matter, may be obtained from various boards and agencies of the U.L.C.A. Our congregations will profit greatly by making more use of these resources.

The CHEY campaign, undertaken by the U.L.C.A. for the support and strengthening of its colleges and seminaries, will come to a close this year. Some of our parishes have already held CHEY rallies and have given considerable sums to this cause.

As concerns this campaign, it is well for us to bear a few facts in mind: Most of our ministers in this

country were trained in seminaries —and some of them in colleges too —belonging to one or another of the larger Lutheran bodies. Never before, in seventy-five years, have our people been asked to take part in a general money-raising campaign for the support of any of these institutions. Contributions to CHEY will support our own schools in the U.L.C.A. Even if we should fail to support these schools they will be supported by others, and will continue training our church leaders.

Another labor of Christian love, carried on by our U.L.C.A. in co-operation with other Lutheran bodies, is *Lutheran World Action.* It has been called "A helping hand", held out toward the victims of war and hate in various parts of the world. Many of our congregations have supported L.W.A. in past years.

Our share in all these great works was prescribed as follows by the convention:

1. Every congregation is urged to meet its full apportionment for *Missions and Benevolences.*

2. Parishes that have not yet conducted rallies for CHEY are requested to hold such rallies this summer or fall. Congregations or individuals contributing to this drive should name the particular school or schools that they wish to support with their gifts.

3. Pastors are urged to present the cause of *Lutheran World Action* to their church councils and their people. Each congregation is urged to devote at least one Sunday's collection to this cause. (Gifts of food and clothing are also solicited and all such gifts should be reported to our Synodical papers and mentioned in the parish reports.)

III. *Parish Education.* On this important subject the convention recommended:

1. That our people avail themselves of the "Sunday School Teaching Clinics" offered to our congregations by the Parish and Church School Board of the U.L.C.A.

2. That committees on Christian Education be set up in every congregation. These committees should study the various teaching aids and other helpful literature offered by the Parish and Church School Board or other agencies of the U.L.C.A.

(Another recommendation was taken care of by Mrs. Blondal's gift of $75 for the purchase of an audio visual kit—see above.)

IV. *Youth Work.* There has been some progress in this work during the year, but much more needs to be done. The convention's recommendations under this head were in substance as follows:

1. That our youth groups be organized on a synodical basis (this is presupposed in the Synod's constitution).

2. That these groups make use of the facilities offered by the Luther League of America.

3. That the support of adult organizations (ladies' aids, mens' clubs, etc.), be enlisted in encouraging youth work among us.

V. *Lutheran Women's League.* This is a federation of ladies' aids in our Synod. It owns and operates the Sunrise Camp, south of Gimli, where Christian training courses for children, young people and Sunday school teachers are conducted every summer. This camp is said to be one of the finest of its kind in Western Canada.

The League has also in times past maintained Sunday schools in some pastorless communities.

The League needs support from our people in obtaining needed help to operate the Camp, and in encouraging full use of its facilities. Contributions in money are also needed. Recommendations adopted by the convention are these:

1. That pastors encourage parents to visit the camp and to send their children there.

2. That parishes assist the directors of the camp in obtaining needed personnel.

3. That the Synod co-operate with

the League in organizing Sunday schools.

4. That our pastors and people maintain a living and abiding interest in the whole work of the League.

VI. *Laymen's Activities.* Without the co-operation and interest of the laymen, the church is enfeebled and the pastor accomplishes little. Our synod is in need of more and stronger laymen's organizations.

Under this head the convention urged our laymen to acquaint themselves with the set-up and activities of the Laymen's Movement for Stewardship, to form a Lutheran Brotherhood unit in every parish—on a synodical basis if practicable—and to adopt, in this work, the Ten Point Program. (See page 248 of the U.L.C.A. Yearbook for 1951.)

VII. *Publications.* A sizeable stock of unsold books was taken off the Synod's list of assets this year. But the books exist, and can no doubt be bought at reduced prices. Chief of these are: Eyland's "Lutherans in Canada" (in English. Contains a short history of our Synod); and Bjarnason's "Rit og Raedur" (In Icelandic, selections from the writings and addresses of the Synod's first president, Dr. Jon Bjarnason).

The Synod's *Icelandic Hymnal* will be on hand as heretofore, also the *Common Service Book.*

All these books may be bought from the Treasurer of the Synod, Mr. Neil Bardal.

Our two periodicals, *Sameiningin* (Icelandic) and *The Parish Messenger* (English), are to be published quarterly this year. The fall issue of *Sameiningin* will carry the *Sessional Reports,* curtailed (i.e. the *Gjordabok*).

To pay its own way, *Sameiningin,* at $1.00 per year, needs 100 to 200 more subscribers; also more advertisements. Cost of the *Messenger* is charged to the congregations, and each congregation gets a supply for distribution among its members.

Our people were urged, by a resolution, to provide more subscribers for *Sameiningin* and more advertisements for both papers, and to see that *The Messenger* is distributed to every home in each parish.

VIII. *Old People's Homes.* The two old people's homes operated under the auspices of our Synod are Betel, at Gimli, Man., and Borg, at Mountain, North Dakota.

Reports from the Betel Committee showed that the cost of operating that institution were nearly balanced by the current receipts, the deficit being only $206, but operating and maintenance costs are bound to increase, so that Betel needs more help from our people. The charge per resident was, with the convention's approval, raised to $45 per month, for all who can afford it.

No report from Borg was laid before the convention. But it is quite certain that both Borg and Betel need generous support from our people.

IX. *Temperance.* On this important subject the convention recommended:

1. That our Sunday schools avail themselves of suitable temperance literature for use in teaching.

2. That temperance films, at least two per year, be shown in each congregation, especially to young people's groups.

3. That pastors endeavor to treat this subject adequately in their preaching.

It was also resolved that selected portions of a comprehensive report on temperance, submitted by Mrs. A. S. Bardal be published in the *Parish Messenger.*

X. *Finances.* On this subject the convention adopted the following recommendations:

1. That the Pastors' Memorial fund be augmented by gifts from our people.

2. That all congregations endeavor to meet their full apportionment.

3. That they pay their Synod dues without fail.

4. That all contributions, whether to Synod or to U.L.C., be paid to the congregation's treasurer, and by him forwarded to the treasurer of the Synod, so that all such payments or gifts may be properly credited.

5. That donations for CHEY be allocated to particular institutions. This may be done either by the individual donors, or by the congregations.

6. The congregations are also urged by the treasurer of the Synod to pay their dues early in the year, or not later than March 31st.

XI. *Changes in the Laws.* The convention adopted a few amendments to the by-laws of the Synod. These have to do mostly with the work of the Executive and proceedings at the annual convention.

One amendment requires the congregations to elect their convention delegates at the annual meeting, whenever possible, and to submit the delegates' names to the Executive (i.e. the Secretary of the Synod) not later than one month before the opening of the convention.

The Executive is required to notify the congregations, not later than April 30, about the time and place of the convention.

Summary. This, in short, is the year's program laid down for our parishes by the convention.

Give one Sunday's collection to the Foam Lake - Wynyard mission. (I).

Make an effort to meet your apportionment. (II,I).

Wind up the campaign for CHEY, and assign the money to particular schools in the U.L.C.A. (II2 and X5).

Give one Sunday's collection to Lutheran World Action. Also conduct drives for clothing and food, if practicable (II3).

Make fuller use of personal help and advice offered by the U.L.C.A. (III, I).

Appoint committees on Christian Education, and encourage use of teaching aids. (III, 2).

Organize youth groups, enlisting help of adult organizations. Encourage the use of Luther League materials. (IV, 1-3).

Give more attention and support to the work of the Lutheran Women's League. (V, 2 1-4).

Learn more about the Stewardship Movement and the Lutheran Brotherhood. Make an effort to organize a Brotherhood unit in your parish. Adopt the Ten Point Program. (VI).

Encourage buying from the Synod's stock of books. (VII).

Get more subscribers for Sameiningin. (VII).

See that The Parish Messenger is well distributed. (VII).

Encourage support of Betel and Borg. (VIII).

Get ads for both papers if possible. (VII).

Procure temperance literature for Sunday school use, and temperance films, if possible. Enlist the pastor's aid in this cause. (IX, 1-3).

Encourage giving to the Pastors' Memorial Fund. (X, 1).

See that the Synod dues are paid. (X, 3).

See that all contributions, to the Synod or U.L.C.A. be forwarded by the treasurer of each congregation. (X, 4).

Make these payments early in the year. (X, 6).

Elect convention delegates at the annual meeting of each congregation. (XI).

Pastors and congregations have repeatedly been urged to send in their reports to the Secretary of the Synod every year. This holds good for the present year too.

Respectfully submitted,
by order of the Convention,

Guttormur Guttormsson.

August, 1951.

"THE SIGNATURE"

From an Old M.S., by Rannveig K. G. Sigbjornsson

(Continued from last Issue)

As for science. Science is the truth of life. All the light that shines on the world today along that line as that of any other, comes directly or indirectly from the Christian Church. God reveals to man His hidden treasures gradually, like a good parent gives his children presents at Christmas or other birthdays, if man in earnest seeks them. It is for us to handle them right. But the love and endurance needed to discover such hidden gifts, come through the knowledge of God's love revealed in Christ, only the enlightened mind can read the love and miracle in a flower, in a beautiful brook tumbling down the mountain side, in rain, in sunshine, in a beautiful picture, beautiful poem, in nature say in the rainbow, in the forest, the field laden with bread wrapped up in tiny kernels. In the sea, calm enough to mirror the surroundings, mighty enough to hide the mountains on the other shore. Only the enlightened mind can see the soul of man in bondage, in the unenlightened man or in the child. Only the enlightened mind and deeply touched by God's love, is willing to sacrifice so much of his or her life or even life itself in order to enlighten that person or to relieve the pain of life. Dr. Simpson who discovered the chloroform, is said to have been an ardent Christian brought up in deeply Christian atmosphere. The struggle he and his fellow worker went through in order to find that which would put humanity to sleep during operations, is remarkable and at a great risk of their own lives they found it. No one can ever figure out how much of God's mercy these men brought to humanity.

Just now (supposedly spoken in 1906) a man by the name of Marconi, is sending out a brand new discovery which is startling the world, though it is in infancy. The wireless telegraphy. Just how much it will mean to the world, few of us who saw it appear on the world's horizen and send its first rays through the world, will know. It is said that no one had faith in Marconi's attempts but his mother — a Christian woman as you can easily see.

The developments in science mentioned might partially — or fully — come true. We may see and hear across the world but I, for one, have great doubts as to our traveling between stars. However, be that as it may. It is just always well for us to remember that the balancing word for freedom is responsibility. But whatever victories we win, yes, even though we fly on golden wings to other stars or sail diamond decorated ships on the high seas, though we harness the greatest power in nature, known or unknown to man, if we disregard Christian principles, we shall not exist long on this our planet. But we will exist. The living God will conquer all evil and ignorance. Jesus said. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, so that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Jesus Christ signed this promise with His heart's blood on Calvary. We, who have been taught this have no right to accept any cheap bargains in religious teachings or doubt the might, the wisdom, the grace of God.

The Rev. Skuli J. Sigurgeirsson of Foam Lake, Sask., has accepted a call to a parish near the City of Indianapolis, Ind., and will move there together with Mrs. Sigurgeirsson, about October 1st. Pastor Sigurgeirsson has served in the Saskatchewan field for about a year and a half.

News Flashes from the Parishes

During the months of July and August, the Rev. Johann Fredriksson, of Lundar, Man., served the Churchbridge, Sask., field. While there he conducted services in the Concordia and Logberg Churches. Good attendances were reported at all services. A Youth Choir sang at the English services. The summer's activity was concluded with a service of Confirmation in the Concordia Church when three young people were confirmed.

President Fafnis and family traveled to the West Coast in late July. In conjunction with this holiday trip, President Fafnis installed Pastor Eric Sigmar as pastor of Calvary Church in Seattle. He was also guest speaker at the Icelandic celebration at Silver Lake, on Aug. 5th.

On Wednesday evening, June 13th Pastor Harald S. Sigmar was installed as pastor of the Gimli Parish by the President of Synod, the Rev. E. H. Fafnis. The service took place in the Gimli Church, with members of Gimli, Arnes, and Husavick Churches taking part. A similar service of installation was held at the Old People's Home, Betel, earlier in the day. Taking part in these special services were: Dr. R. Marteinsson, Dr. H. Sigmar, Pastors Eylands, Olafson, and E. Sigmar. At a later date a service of installation was held in the Lutheran Church in Hecla.

A farewell service was held in the Grund Church, Argyle Parish, on Sunday, July 1st. At this service Pastor Eric Sigmar bade farewell to the four congregations of Argyle Parish which he had served for four years. Following the service, a farewell party was held in honor of the Pastor and his bride. Mr. B. S. Johnson acted as chairman. Mr. G. J. Oleson spoke on behalf of the parish and extended their thanks for the pastor's four years of service. The presidents of the four congregations also spoke briefly. Mrs. R. Rawlings spoke on behalf of the Ladies' Aids. Other speakers were Dr. R. Helgason, H. Arason and F. Presunka. Mr. and Mrs. Sigmar were presented a generous purse from the Parish, and also a China dinner set. Other beautiful gifts were presented by the Ladies Aids, the Sunday School, and the Choir. There was also an "open purse" from the community. Lunch was served to about 300 members and friends of the parish.

The Rev. S. Olafsson of Selkirk, conducted a service of confirmation for our congregation at Brown, Man., on Sunday, July 2nd.

On Sunday, Sept. 9th, the newly acquired parsonage of the Blaine parish will be dedicated. Taking part will be the pastor, Dr. Sigmar, and the Rev. E. H. Sigmar of Seattle.

At a well-attended and festive service in Calvary Church, on Aug. 1st, the Rev. E. H. Sigmar was installed as its pastor by President Fafnis. Other pastors taking part in the service were Dr. H. Sigmar, Pastors G. P. Johnson, and K. Simundson. Following the service, a reception was held in the Church Parlours for the new pastor and his wife.

On Aug. 17th, "Open House" was held in the new parsonage in Gimli. Pastor and Mrs. Sigmar received 180 guests in the afternoon and evening, and refreshments were served by the Ladies' Aids.

After the July holidays regular morning and evening services were resumed in the First Lutheran Church, Winnipeg, on August 12th. Considerable re-modeling and renovation is still in progress on the church building.

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The Rev. Carl J. Olson, for many years pastor in our Synod, passed away at his Columbus, Nebraska home, September 3rd, at the age of 66 years. The funeral service was held in Selkirk, September 15th.

Sunrise Camp Has Active Season

This summer Sunrise Lutheran Camp was operated for a longer term than ever before—from June 26th to August 24th. For the first ten days a group of blind, and partially blind people stayed at camp. This was sponsored by The Canadian Institute for the Blind, who supplied guides, a recreational director and a housemother. The camp was responsible for the personnel of kitchen and dining room An efficient and gracious service was rendered there by Mrs. S. O. Ejerring and Mrs. Rosa Johannsson of Winnipeg. Mrs. Stanley Sigurdson and Mrs. M. Oliver of Selkirk. There was a deep appreciation shown by everyone who stayed at camp with that group.

The Sunday School Teachers Association had their annual rally next. Their president is Mr. A. McNichol of Winnipeg; secretary Miss M. Lambertson of Glenboro, with Miss Emily Stefanson of Selkirk as treasurer.

This was followed by the Leadership Training Group, with 25 campers. In this group, a course in Leadership is given in Church work, Sunday School and Camp leadership. That this group is never a large one is an advantage as more individual attention can be given to each one. Rev. S. Olafsson and Rev. H. S. Sigmar acted as Deans; Miss Eleanore L. Gillstrom as assistant instructor; Mrs. H. B. Hofteig as Matron; Mrs. J. Gray and Nurse; Mr. G. Pearson, Swimming.

The four childrens groups came next; Junior Girls, Junior Boys and Senior Girls, Senior Boys. The first of these was directed by Mrs. S. J. Sigurgeirson of Foam Lake, Sask., who was assisted by Mrs. D. Didick, Miss Marlyn Thorsteinson and Miss Helen Oliver all of Selkirk; Mrs. Florence Paulson as Nurse. The group of Junior Boys was directed by Rev. and Mrs. S. J. Sigurgeirson, assisted by three Junior Leaders, Johann Johnson of Gimli; Victor Magnusson and B. Goodbrandson of Selkirk; Mrs. Didick was Swimming Teacher.

The Senior Girls Group was under the direction of Mrs. I. Hart of Winnipeg. She was assisted by four Junior Leaders, Miss Rita Corrigal, Anne Kennedy, June Martin and Inga Stevens; Nurse, Mrs. R. McRae; Swimming, Mrs. Didick.

Senior Boys were under the direction of Mr. Harvey Hedley of Hamiota who is specializing in Boys work with the Y.M.C.A., Winnipeg. Junior Leaders were Jackie Williams, C. Kurbis and B. Goodbrandson; Nurse, Mrs. A. Johnson; Swimming, Mrs. Didick.

Three looms were purchased during the summer making it possible to add weaving to the list of activities in camp. Mrs. A. Wathne of Winnipeg supervised that handicraft with two of the groups.

During the whole season, Mrs. S. Olafsson of Selkirk acted as Camp Director. Counting all groups there were 32 persons that worked with her during the summer in camp (leaders, kitchen and dining room help and nurses). Counting all who stayed in camp this summer, longer or shorter periods, there were 275 persons. A larger attendance than ever before.

One building was added to the camp this summer, a cabin donated, fully furnished, by Mrs. D. S. Curry.

The growing popularity of the camp was shown by the large attendance at each of the closing concerts and by the number of organizations who offered to serve lunch at these occasions.